

Greens Outline Plans for Better High Streets

Across the region, local Green Parties have been campaigning to prevent high streets from becoming clone towns, dominated by chain stores and hollowed out by supermarket takeovers.

The Green Party in Ely in Cambridgeshire for instance has outlined plans to make the high street an attractive and vibrant centre of the community.

East Cambridgeshire Green Party has called for local councils to use planning policy and the Sustainable Communities Act to ensure that high streets have a full range of local shops and services. This should allow smaller businesses to compete with edge of town developments. The Green Party has thus urged the local council to implement measures which would prevent chain stores taking over independent shops, and control the saturation of certain business types such as betting shops.

In Babergh District, in Suffolk where the Greens won their first council seat in 2014, the local party has been successfully campaigning against the introduction of another supermarket in the market town of Hadleigh - which if built, it is claimed, would threaten local businesses and jobs.

Similar campaigns, spearheaded by Greens, have occurred elsewhere, such as in St Albans in Hertfordshire.

Suffolk Greens condemn the privatisation of care homes

In Suffolk, Green Party councillors are fighting against the further privatisation of care homes following concerns about the quality of care provided by the private company Care UK in late 2014

In 2012 the Conservative County Council transferred control of 16 care homes to Care UK, despite opposition from Green councillors. The party has continued to campaign against the decision. Councillor Mark Ereira-Guyer said:

"It has led to low wages, low quality care and treachery to older and vulnerable people. Unravelling the mistake is likely to cost far more than any putative savings".

Renationalising the Railways: A Green Party Commitment

The Green Party has continued to stress the need to renationalise the railways in Britain and the party's MP, Caroline Lucas,

has been spearheading this campaign.

Such a move is popular across Britain. Figures from a poll conducted by YouGov in late 2013 found that approximately two thirds of people favoured a publicly owned rail network.

Across East Anglia the railway infrastructure was continually beset by problems throughout 2014.

Nationally, the Department for Transport recently confirmed that certain commuter services were up to 111 percent over their capacity at peak times. This comes at a time when regulated rail fares nationally rose another 2.2 percent in January.

Responding to the latest figures, Rupert Read, Green Party Transport spokesperson and parliamentary candidate for Cambridge, said:

"These figures are a wake-up call. It is absurd that our travelling public are being crammed into trains that are over double their capacity. Passengers



Green campaigners call for the renationalisation of the railways

should not have to put up with these kinds of conditions when prices continue to rocket. It's clear that the current privatised model for running our network is not delivering the investment and improvements the travelling public need and deserve.

"The Green Party believes that mass transport ought to be a joined-up public service, not turned into a source of profit. The railways ought to be run to serve the common good, and the only way to do this is to take the railways back into public ownership. This is a view that is overwhelmingly popular with the public and one that the Green Party has long been committed to."

In order to promote greater rail use, the Green Party has stressed that it would increase rail subsidies to lower prices for travellers by 10 percent.

The Green Party is therefore committed to:

- 1) Renationalising the railways
- 2) Cutting rail fares by 10 percent across the board

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